

THE
GOVERNMENT AND LAWS

OF

EVERY COUNTRY,

ARE THE

EFFECT,

NOT THE

CAUSE,

OF THE

CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

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PREFACE.

THE following Essay is rather intended as hints to the ingenious for a more complete and better arranged work, than as a performance in itself. My circumstances do not allow me at present to give to the principles I here wish to establish, that extensive elucidation, it appears to me the matter deserves. It has long ago been asserted by many able writers, that the form of government we perceive in any state, is not principally the work of human foresight, but the gradual result of time and experience, of circumstances and emergencies. And that even much of the evil tendency of mistaken policy and dislocated arrangement, has been corrected by the wisdom of nature ; or that strong inclination, felt by every individual, to better his condition. Mr. WARD, too, in his inquiry into the foundation and history of the law of nations in Europe, shews by a chain of irresistible facts, the incapacity of human reason for the discovery of moral truth, when unassisted by revelation. Yet I have seen no where sufficient light thrown on the incapacity among the great majority of mankind for the perception of moral truth, even after it has been discovered. Nor on the inefficacy of current opinions for moral practice, independent of *situation*. On the contrary, much reliance seems to be placed, by most writers on the dissemination of knowledge by *tuition*, among the people at large, as a principle from which moral and political improvement, and industrious habits, are to arise. Neither have I seen the effects of the state of capital, on the structure of society, *sufficiently* attended to. When in my opinion, this affords a key to account for most, if not all, the revolutions of every kind we witness in states. These are the points to which it is my aim to draw the attention of the reader, by appealing to the invariable conduct of man in all countries, and in all stages of civilization. It may, however, happen to the matter of this Essay, what Mr. Dugald Stewart says, when speaking of some of the ideas of Hobbes, that it is the fate of unread writers to work on the revival of exploded systems. But it appears to me, that if the principles here contained are not admitted, there is no reason why we should reject the visions of political justice ; with perhaps the exception only of men being able to live without eating, drinking, sleeping or the like. For even the tendency of the species, to increase beyond the means of subsistence, so completely established by Mr. Malthus, would not be an insurmountable obstacle to almost Utopian felicity, if men were generally reasonable. For in that case the population of every country could be reduced to the standard of subsistence by the preventive check. The only object of the following pages, and it would be inconsistent with the doctrines they contain, to expect any other, is the warning the sensible against that zeal, political, moral, and of

reforms, to which they are very liable, when not thoroughly acquainted with the character of mankind, and that makes them often act in a manner very injurious to the public and themselves, placing them at all times in a very ridiculous light. What causes that men of genius are seldom, perhaps never fit for the practical transactions of life, is, that they have nothing like a correct idea of other people's minds. Measuring the generality of men by themselves, their plans and views are not adapted to the dulness and weakness of the ordinary inhabitants of these sublunary regions. As they aim at too much, their expectations are always disappointed. In proportion too, as they entertain exaggerated conceptions of the species, they find every individual short of their imaginary scale. They become incapable of discovering or appreciating comparative merit, and are apt to treat with severity and censure, even the worthiest persons. They grow sour and misanthropic. The whole tenor of their conduct is viewed by ordinary persons, and not unjustly, as eccentric and deranged. Our practice is with individuals, not with the species. And so that set of true opinions that tend to make us moderate and patient, ought to be encouraged, at the expence of chimerical encomiums, that have the contrary bias. The reader is put in mind, that whatever is here advanced, regards always the human race as viewed in masses; that no notice is taken of individual deviations, as not sufficient to affect the general theory.

Some apology may perhaps be considered necessary for introducing at too much length, Mr. Malthu's system of population, and other maxims in political economy, already generally known, but as the present theory is entirely built on those principles, and as they admit of being considered in very different ways, I thought it absolutely necessary to expose to the reader my view of them.

About the beginning of October last, I sent from Boston, (U. S.) to Messrs. Longman & Co. publishers in London, a manuscript, containing the substance of the present treatise, but rather in the shape of loose notes, so that those gentlemen could have such form given to them, as they might have thought proper; for I had then very little expectation of being able for a long while to pay any attention to the matter. I dont know whether any thing has been done about it. These notes however, were published in Boston about the beginning of last January, pretty much in the same shape as they went to London. Having now a small chance, I thought fit to throw into something like a regular essay, a subject, which, I believe, is not without some importance.

Those who may be inclined to censure such faults of idiom and style, as must have crept into this composition, are made aware, that the writer does not use his native language, and that his opportunities of cultivating English have not been great.

THE GOVERNMENT, &c.

ALL systems of politics and moral philosophy appear to have been built, on a highly overrated supposition, of what we will call the free agency of man, or his capacity of acting, according to certain maxims or rules, introduced to point out a correct manner of conduct. For in those systems the common reach of the mental powers of the species, has been measured too much by the best instances of it. But after some observation, it will be found, that the difference of natural intelligence, between one man and another, is much greater, than what has as yet been generally imagined; except in such ordinary avocations of life, where only an often repeated routine is followed. We perceive every day, the great embarrassment of almost every individual, in such occurrences as are any ways novel, although in perfect analogy with those in common practice. This exaggeration of the human faculties is the cause of the many apparent inconsistencies in the human character, and of that wide difference, always to be noticed, between practical results, and what might have been anticipated by theories. Who, for instance, that is acquainted with christian promises and threats, could have foretold such a practical disregard for the bliss of heaven, and the torments of hell, in a people who really believe in them. And this not only with the stupid and uncultivated, but among those too, who appear of a very different character, and who have neither shaken off those beliefs, as idle and chimerical, and yet do not in the least act according to them. It is noticed in holy writ, and by sacred writers, that man, when unassisted by divine grace, can only be moved by his carnal wants and desires; and that even in those cases, where his conduct is praise worthy, this is more the effect of his tempérment, his habits or his want of temptation for sin, than of his judgment or foresight. For neither of these are of that strength, that it has been taken for granted, in philosophical systems. In most cases such maxims as a man knows, hang loosely in his memory, rather as formularies in vogue, than as regulators of his actions. He has by rote a set of opinions, correct or not, as he may have chanced to get them, which he pours out, when occasion call them forth, pretty much in the same manner, as most of the learned wear their information, or as a canary bird repeats the tunes he has been taught, when the first notes, or some other circumstance brings them to his mind. The strange power too of passion over reason, even in the best disposed and enlightened, has struck every common observer. How many of the worthiest,

and otherwise most valuable members of society, degrade themselves to misery and shame, because they are not able to counteract such a pitiful inclination, as that for strong liquors, and against which they are continually taking the warmest and most sincere resolutions. All other desires are in all probability no less effective, although not so visible in their operation. If this is the case with the best specimens, what ought to be expected from the reasoning powers of ordinary individuals? It is a fortunate circumstance, however, that the passions are, in most persons, not much stronger than their reason or their virtue. We do not include among these weak passions, the corporeal wants. Otherwise the sinners of the world, would be such demons as Milton's satan, and Mr. Godwin's or lord Byron's heroes. If the elements of character were better known, such pictures would likely be found out of nature as incoherent. The mixture of *great* virtues, and *great* vices in the same person, however abundant in history or romance, will seldom, perhaps never, be found in real life. A virtuous person may have great weaknesses, and a scoundrel may be of that hardness of nerves and that ostentatious disposition, that will in some circumstances produce brilliant effects. But cruelty, and real generosity—the cunning necessary to usurp an elevated station, and real grandeur, are entirely incompatible. Whatever inclination there may be to doubt of the authenticity of holy writ, or to undervalue the authority of sacred writers, certain it is that the experience of all ages, and of all countries, has warranted their views of human nature, out of all comparison beyond the speculations of those philosophers, that are called benevolent, because they profess extravagant opinions of the human character. The benevolent and amiable Addison distressed his friend Steele, for a sum of which he was in no need; and likewise entered into several cabals to depress the reputation of his rivals. In the morality that is natural to man, might is the only rule and limit of right. He feels the smallest wants of his own, in a very clear and distinct manner, and very feebly those of others, even the most urgent. Of course he must hate his fellow man, as the opponent of his power, or the rival of his pursuits and wish of dominion and glory; and when rivalship has ceased by the acknowledged superiority of one of the parties, contempt follows on the one side and envy on the other. The strong considers the weak only as a thing subservient to his desires. Besides this, nobody wants to see any one happier than himself, in the same manner as every body dislikes to meet with the wiser or the stronger. But as every one must have found it very troublesome, to be continually enforcing his power in doubtful strife, against that of another, practical warfare among individuals of the same tribe, must soon have ceased, by habit hatred must have lulled into indifference, and courtesy be established to keep up the truce. That politeness is only a mask for real enmity is proved by the circumstance, that it becomes ridiculous in proportion as friendship takes place between two or more persons. However, vent was given to the inclination for hostility by war on strangers, which continued without intermission, until nations growing rich and improved, convenience made it mutually necessary, to be some-

times at peace. But although practical acts of hostility subsided almost entirely among members of the same nation, secret enmity goes on even among brothers and sisters, ready to break out on the smallest provocation of interest, or rivalship. Christianity urges the love of our neighbour, to counteract our natural hatred of him. If this love was a natural disposition, it would be a passion, that like every other, would perhaps require control, instead of encouragement. The rarity of sincere friendship has always been proverbial, at the same time that nothing has been more abundant, except indifference, that deep and lasting aversion.— Even a passion for the other sex, much more refined than that of the lower animals, does not appear to be very common. The reputation of gallantry and tenderness, seems to render a character peculiarly amiable, so as to make it our delight in our plays and romances. When there is a real and warm attachment between two married persons, that couple becomes respectable, and is an object of commendation. Now if such sentiments were any ways general, no more credit would be given for them, than for the rejoicing at our own good fortune. That perfect and unbounded confidence, that would always take place between man and wife, if the species was endowed with a better character, is scarcely to be met with. (It is not here meant, confidence of conjugal chastity.) So, that after the fall of man, matrimony seems to have originated not in premeditated advantages that were too refined for his understanding, and that would have been neglected as much as any other moral injunction. The human mind has too little consistency to continue long in practices or habits that have not some permanent and material foundation in his immediate wants. But first in the necessity of avoiding strife, and in the instinctive sympathy for his children, and then in the ease of repetition, which engenders habit. A savage prefers hunting often in the same forest, to the trying a new one every day. The civilized man commonly frequents the same shop, the same walk, and the same every thing else. Almost all birds pair in the same manner, and can in general be a pattern to man in conjugal conduct. If we once admit, that war is the natural disposition of man, of which it appears little doubt can be entertained, all theories of disinterested or religious virtue, or even of a conduct rationally selfish, from principle, ever becoming general, must vanish like the distant cloud. The elements of this character, are an almost total deficiency of sympathy, and a perfect incapacity of being aware of consequences; that is a most narrow sighted selfishness. Nothing of this, however, attaches in particular to the individual warrior. Since war is the natural element of man, a nation that would avoid the necessary strife, or a man that would decline the profession of arms when expedient to his fortunes, would act upon principles very foreign to the natural conformation of the world. If the truth of this picture is not proved, by our own public and private actions, by our system of society, by the history of all nations, and of all times, we must conceive the whole tenor of human conduct, as a most unaccountable phenomenon. The uneasiness and distrust we suffer in the presence of strangers, before a truce is made by acquaintance, and the interest we feel for children, are indubita-

ble proofs of the same. The characteristic of children, is impotence and imbecility, which would render them contemptible if it was permanent, but as we conceive them free from those dispositions that render grown persons our enemies, and our rivals, we seem to rest with them, from our warfare with the species. When a man abstains from doing injury to any person, and is at all times ready to do justice to every one, he becomes a character highly esteemed and applauded, even if he does not perform acts of goodness of any importance. This shows that we are always in the expectation of harm from others, instead of kindness. The long standing question of whether war is in the nature of man or not, appears to be pretty much of the same sort, as that other one sometime ago agitated among philosophers, of whether or no he is naturally an eater of flesh. The practical superiority of man in a civilized society, when compared to that of a savage, or of a man in less improved society, proceeds from habits, occasioned by his better circumstances, that afford him a less gross manner of satisfying his wants and desires, which wants and desires become also more refined, so as to render a high degree of brutality impracticable, and a smaller one dangerous and disreputable.

In the course of this essay, we shall try to point out in what manner this melioration is brought about.

From the forced superiority of practices, in consequence of better situation, more improved theories take place. Consistent and generally practised theories, are the effect, not the cause of practices. The nature of those theories, that have not had their origin in practice, show very plainly, of what reveries the human mind is capable, the moment it enters the regions of speculation, and experience shows too how far they are disregarded in real life. These theories could not have been produced in a state of society where life would have been less convenient, and are entirely unintelligible to men in less improved circumstances. The savage that would see an European treating his prisoner of war with kindness, and dismissing him without ransom, would not be able to conceive the motive of a conduct so absurd, in his manner of viewing the matter. What he would ask, does he not feel the least resentment towards his enemy? Is he not afraid of being killed by him some other time? You might tell him as much as you pleased, that governments are at war, not individuals. That those men have a mutual advantage in not killing nor doing each other any harm. Then they are friends he would say, why do they fight? In the name of their different governments, you would answer. But for all that, he would believe Europeans detestable sort of monsters, that destroy their friends, and spare their enemies. Some writers have already remarked, that it is perfectly visionary to expect the introduction of European morality and manners, in such countries as New Holland, or New Zealand, without introducing European agriculture and arts, that is European situation. And even if such countries are colonized by civilized nations, the whole population will at last proceed from those settlers, and the aborigines by degrees disappear without ever having attained any portion of civilization. The civilized man and the savage have no point of con-

fact by habit, and so cannot amalgamate. But if the country is very extensive, containing large prairies, and a good climate, the increase of cattle faster than what can be destroyed, turns the hunter into the herdsman, before the civilized man, by natural increase, possesses himself of all the land. This has been the case with the Indians in some of the Spanish colonies. In others they had already taken some steps towards improvement before their discovery. The subjects of Montezuma and the Incas, were but little inferior to some of the African nations. After a people comes to a certain degree of discipline by habit, is disposed to every improvement.— There is no sort of dexterity among men of which the negroes are not capable. Much too can and is made of the Spanish Indians, although not so much as of the negroes. But the wandering savage is perfectly untamable. Mons. Cuvier, says that nothing short of divine interposition can effect this. That extraordinary people, called the gipsies, after ages of residence among the most civilized nations, are almost in as perfect a state of nature as the American hunter. An ingenious Spanish gentleman, is of opinion, that they are the aboriginal natives of every country, and that the other inhabitants are descended of colonies from nations civilized more or less, either by divine agency, or by some natural causes extraordinarily powerful. Of this last class, he supposes even the Celtæ and other tribes, that the Phœnicians Carthaginians, Romans, &c. met in Spain. This conjecture will appear far from groundless, if we consider how little the gipsies have assimilated to the people among whom they inhabit, the striking resemblance that they bear to each other in distant countries, and among nations of the most dissimilar character and manners, such as those that live on the coast of Barbary and in Germany. Their resemblance too with the wandering American Indian, is every particle as near, as their relative situation with the other tribes will permit. This general system can only be the work of nature. These beings were pressed by colonies, which increased too fast to allow them the necessary gradations of habits by situation. Their numbers and character dwindled into such insignificance, as not to make them an object of serious persecution. If they had been originally an improved nation that had emigrated, we would know something of the time and of the place from whence they proceeded. They would have amalgamated with the people where they settled. They have no religious system at all, and religious tennets would never have prevented this union, which all governments, more or less, have tried to effect. The slight persecutions they have suffered, have been such only as are practised on beggars and other vagrants.— Charles IIId of Spain, ordered some of the smartest into the regiments, but nothing could be made of them, and they were discharged. During these persecutions, they withdrew to the woods and dug holes in the ground like rabbits. A people not more improved than the gipsies are now, would have never migrated very far. Savages are no distant travellers. A gipsy in the South of Spain thinks no more of visiting his brethren in France, than a Canadian Indian to go to Cape Horn. He does not know even that they exist. The gipsy hates the society of other people, on the same principle that

a vulgar low person feels shy in going into the presence of his betters. He there suffers a sense of inferiority extremely disagreeable. This is the real principle of the strangeness of that race. The Jews differ in very little else from the people among whom they live, but in faith, and some usages attached to their creed. The small peculiarities to be perceived in their character, are the effect of persecution, and even without this circumstance, their faith also would have disappeared long ago. When two equal or nearly equal bodies of people meet in a country, with different ideas, they fight; but they assimilate by degrees, and a mixed system is at last the result. But if one of the parties is very inferior, the strongest will persecute with all the malice of the human character, and the weak cling close to each other for mutual support. Also the origin and history of the Jews is a well known matter.

It would certainly be a task, very much out of the purpose, to enter here into a detailed history of the crimes, vices and follies of mankind, for every one any ways acquainted with history or travels, is well aware of this circumstance. Where christianity has not thrown its light, religious tenets, and moral practices, are nothing but a system of absurdity, atrocity and indecency. This is not solely among nations in a state of barbarity, but among those two, as have made very considerable progress in politeness, arts and sciences, such as the Greeks, the Romans, and others. Not for a short period, or during the action of transitory and peculiar combination of circumstances, but established as duties, or recommended as meritorious, for ages and more ages. Hume, says, that the religious beliefs that have existed in the world, have more the appearance of sick men's dreams, or of the ravings of a mad house, than of dispensations sent from heaven to guide the conduct of mortals. Yet religious precepts must always originate in what is considered expedient, or in what inclination of some kind leads to. Those painful practices recommended by some creeds, were engendered in the ostentatious love of distinction, of those who had no other means of acquiring glory. This shows, in the clearest manner, that man in general finds no difficulty in embracing, and most religiously respecting any absurdity, ever so glaring. And this too on points which he considers, as of the utmost importance, and consequently, that he is incapable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, virtue and vice. — Whatever portion of other talents there may be in the world, we must infer from the conduct of men, that judgement is the rarest. And what there is of it, is almost of no effect, by the circumstance, that it is only judgement, that can discern its operations in others; and the generality of people being incapable of this, they must be governed by their own views of things; besides that very body fancies for himself a superiority on this rare gift. This is evidently the cause of the strong hold of prejudice, so as to resist demonstration itself. Mr. Edmund Burke seems to have been well aware of this circumstance, when he asserted, that with the control of the press, he would venture to establish in a short time any opinion, no matter how extravagant. This indeed is palpable, when we see every day, in treatises replete with ingenuity and erudition,

doctrines maintained, that are repugnant to common sense, and to the information of our organs, and where visible and contradictory extravagancies are forced into agreement by the most flimsy and far fetched subtleties. And what is more, when some well attested fact comes in contradiction with these airy fabrics, so as not to admit of a conciliation, of any sort, the fact is rejected, at least for a great while, and dreams maintain their ground. The non-discovery of hidden truths may show the weakness of human reason; but the adoption of glaring errors, proves the total want of it.— These impertinences attract the attention of the learned, command their assent, and employ their understanding, until other questions, equally vain, drive the preceding ones away. Cicero said, there is no nonsense, but can be found among the opinions of some philosopher. The proposition would have maintained the ground almost as well, had he said, there is no opinion of a philosopher, but what turns out to be nonsense, if it does not admit of an easy and often repeated trial by experiment. Nor can we here plead, that if these dreams are generally received, it is the effect of reverence to admitted opinions; this confirms, instead of destroying the foregoing doctrine. That man is certainly blind, that can be led into a ditch by another. We perceive, likewise, by the history of man, that when moral maxims have been ascertained, he in general is yet incapable to feel sufficiently their expediency, so as to consider them as efficient motives for action. The errors of the theories of political justice, lay in considering as want of cultivation, what in general is the natural and unsurmountable deficiency of the mental powers. As it has already been hinted, in few are the passions of that vigour, that would make them run in the face of certain ruin, or of great inconvenience, if they were capable of bringing, in a clear manner to their minds, what they do not actually feel; or of discriminating distinctly between the uncertain, and the improbable, or impossible. If the inconveniences of something that flatters our appetites, are not very clear, certain and immediate, we take it for granted, that we can sin with impunity. With the same simplicity we expect whatever indulges our hopes, often on the strength of a bare possibility. The division of the human species ought not to be so much of the cultivated and uncultivated, as that of the capable and incapable. The authors of the doctrine of perfectibility, say the Editors of the London Quarterly Review, mistook the improveability of the human knowledge, for the perfectibility of human nature. A mistake of the same sort is made, when we fancy that a melioration of habits the consequence of situation, is an improvement of character. Slaves are in all probability much better treated, all things considered, among the Algerines and Arabs, than among the Christian and civilized West-Indians. No where is a slave better off than under the Indians of Florida, because the wants of the master being few, very little labour of the servant will supply them. A negro there divides his crop with his owner, who never asks if more might not be made, and, as on the other hand, he is generally the wiser of the two; he is far from being in the abject condition we find him among the whites, for this reason the Florida planters cannot keep their

slaves, although they treat them better than any other white people. After the introduction of christianity, man continues, as rude and profligate in practice as before. He disgraces the pure and simple doctrines of that divine religion, with the most whimsical reveries. His conduct, as in every other case, meliorates solely with his situation. And the only effect that it appears to have had on the world, was the drawing to it from other subjects, those controversies, arguments, and disputes, that our stupidity and spirit of wrangling, engender. And a religion whose ground work is peace, whose every command is good will to all creation, was made the pretext for the most atrocious persecutions. But these crimes never had their origin in religious zeal. If man was not naturally cruel, no zeal of any kind would ever make him so. Human reasoning appears to be pretty much of the nature of a rope, with one end fastened to a point, so that the other may be placed with equal ease in the most opposite directions. And thus, it may be laid down as a maxim, that inclination leads opinion, instead of opinion leading inclination. The archbishop of Cambray would have never had Calvin burnt nor otherwise injured, as this last did Cervetus, and if he did, it would not be from opinions, that his mind would have formed uninfluenced by others. If benevolence was the natural character of man, coercion would have been much less practised in the world, than what necessity would have demanded ; for mercy has on its side all his great indolence. When men left off murdering, plundering, and captivating each other in the name of religion, they began to do the same in that of liberty, or of good order. It may be curious to examine now, how men pass from one sort of fanaticism to another. Fanaticism is an ardent desire of distinction and power. When Europe was so immersed in ignorance, that few had any knowledge of religious dogmas, those that were any ways conversant in this matter, claimed the high rank and authority, that they thought their superior knowledge entitled them to. When this sort of erudition was general, so as to be no longer an object of distinction, those fanatically disposed, became liberal on that head, and turned their minds from religion to politics. This process, however, can only apply to the leaders of factions, for the natural inclination to war is what moves the multitude. With a constitution of mind like this in the species, it would be unwarrantable to suppose, that whatever structure of government exists in any state, may proceed from the foresight of any person, or set of persons. How often will this foresight, if it can be the endowment of any individual, be accompanied with power ? According to the anterior principles, it cannot be expected in a council ; for a body of men, say 1, 2, or 300, in whatever manner chosen, must partake of the general characteristics of the species, and in new paths not be able to discriminate between the dictates of wisdom, and the wild proposals of vision. Their resolutions will, for the most part, be according to the notions of the people from which they are taken ; and if they attempt to deviate, it will be to propose some impracticable scheme that will throw the country into anarchy. Nothing of this, however, is intended against constitutional councils, where they have grown of themselves. In

certain periods of the process of society, they will naturally come on and with them, its ordinary march will be better secured, than with a single man against temporary derangements of caprice or prejudice. But supposing that some extraordinary man, or still more extraordinary council, could devise some great institutions, for which the general state of things should not be ready, how are they to be carried into execution? The grand Seignior, far from being able to govern the Turks against their habits or prejudices, is himself an abject slave to custom, form and etiquette, and woe to him the moment he attempts to deviate. What became of the institutions that Alfred, and Charlemagne, are said to have brought forth? Those of Peter the Great of Russia, would have met with the same fate, had he lived three, two, and probably one century before. If they succeeded, it was owing to the principle, that in the next part of this essay will be pointed out, as the great regulator of society, and which leads human reason, instead of being led by it.

THE difference of the state of one society in all its points and that of another, is the difference of the means of subsistence, and its actual population, and of the increase of subsistence, compared with the power of increase of population.

Mr. Malthus, in his essay on population, endeavours to shew that a great portion of the misery and vice, that afflicts human nature, proceeds from its tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence. To establish this point, he tries to prove, that man, like every other animal and vegetable, would multiply in an infinite manner, if want of subsistence did not check this augmentation. Therefore, that every country contains in general the population that, in its circumstances, it can maintain. That as every where the increase of population is checked by want; there is in every country that misery, and that kind of vice that is the necessary consequence of want. With this view he investigates at what rate mankind would increase, according to its generating power, and after quoting the opinion of several authors, he fixes for doubling on the period of 25 years, as a term, that has been verified, beyond all doubt in the United States, ever since the settling of that country. The access of foreigners from such distant places as can go there, not only is not competent to accelerate the doubling of a population already considerable, but not in the least to make up for the checks that even there are in action. At this rate a single married couple will grow into 1,099,511,627,716 in only one thousand years; that is a number greater than the whole earth contains by about a thousand times. It is, however, highly probable, that mankind has not doubled during that period. This point, established in so satisfactory a manner as it appears it is, all the rest are mere corollaries. The checks to population he divides into two classes, the positive and the preventive. The preventive is people not giving way to their inclination to marry, for fear of the distresses and embarrassments of getting a family they cannot provide for, with the conveniences or luxry they deem it necessary to their standing

in society; and the positive is the destruction occasioned on the born by war and sickness. The absurd plans or ambitious views of the rulers of civilized nations would often be ineffectual, if their subjects were generally in convenient circumstances. For who would quit his family, and a tolerable degree of comfort, for the portion of glory and expectations, that fall to the lot of a common soldier? Despotic regulations, that would force men to arms, except in the defence of their homes and fortunes, could not exist in countries so situated. Thus we see that war among civilized nations is rendered practicable only by the want or scarcity of subsistence among many of the members of at least one of the parties engaged. It is already a trite observation, that voluntary soldiers are to be got most commonly, where and when the facility of getting a livelyhood is the smallest. But the slaughter of war, great as it is, does not seem to tend to diminish population. The number of inhabitants of the ancient territory of France has by all accounts increased during the last thirty years of unremitting, and in modern times, unprecedented conflict, much more than during the preceding thirty of almost profound peace. This excess of increase was occasioned by the distribution of ecclesiastical and noble domains by which private unproductive expenditure was diminished, which counteracted the expences of the war; and as foreign trade and many manufactures were interrupted and capital ceased to flow out, a great additional wealth was directed towards agriculture, that admitted as yet of considerable improvements, and so the means of subsistence in the country were augmented. Since the slaughter of war does not diminish population in Europe the difference of its increase noticed between that part of the world and America, must be accounted for entirely on the difference of action of the other checks. And if the climate of Europe be considered as healthy as that of the United States, of which very little doubt can be entertained the excess of mortality in the former must flow from sickness occasioned by excessive labour, unhealthy work long protracted, bad and scanty food, scarcity of clothes, bad and crowded lodgings, and all the other concomittants of poverty, and from the vice occasioned by excessive riches and wretched poverty. Mr. Malthus here proceeds to substantiate these doctrines by facts, and takes a view of all the nations of the world, ancient and modern, barbarous and civilized, and shows in a most able manner how this principle has acted on the whole of them. But here we will only observe, that in a country where the population is greater than the means of employing it, labour of course will not be in demand. The owners of capital will exact the greatest quantity of labour for the smallest portion of subsistence, consistent with the number of labourers, and the demand for labour. That is, a man will have to work much and fare badly. If he gets married, his offspring will not be able to go through the hardships of such circumstances, and will perish. It is probable that the greatest part of labourers in Europe are the children of poor proprietors, and not of those that have nothing but their work, and that the classes between the highest and the lowest, keep up the whole population of a country by casual assent when fortune favors, and by a regular and gradual

descent in the ordinary course of things. The children of a man that has something, are naturally poorer than the father, for his property must be divided among many. That part of the population that remains out of employ on account of their inferior natural advantages, situation or events, must live either by charity as far as this will go, and by prostitution or violence. These evils are a permanent stream that sink in the grave the remainder of population over the means of subsistence, and cannot be stopped, but by the preventive check. Any attempt to relieve the horrors of this process, by any other method, only tends to increase its violence. For it augments the surplus of mouths, over the number of rations, by keeping alive a longer time those, that must at last die of misery, and by occasioning new births. Even if the human character was some degrees superior to what it actually is, without the preventive check this course of things would take place in the same manner. We must now speak of the means of subsistence, a subject already ably treated by Messrs. Smith, Say, Ganhil, Ricardo, and others.

The means of subsistence, is that stock from which food, raiment, &c. is to be derived, and must be divided into territory, capital, and knowledge. Capital is, according to Adam Smith, that fund of food, clothes, lodging, and tools of every description, necessary to maintain all the members of society, till the reproduction of the same articles. A farmer cannot get a crop, without having at his disposal before hand, besides territory and knowledge, all the food, clothes, lodging, and tools, to be used by the labourers. Without this capital, that production cannot be obtained. The case is the same with a nation, as with an individual; therefore the quantity of labour will always be proportioned to the capital. Nor is extent of territory sufficient. If to a new colony, with indefinite territory, a number of people would go, greater than the quantity of actual capital would allow, it is evident that they would create a famine, that would diminish the produce of next year, and the population. The difference of condition between the people of the United States and Russia, is that of capital respecting the population. They are both equally exuberant in territory.—There is a natural tendency in capital to increase, from the principle, that man in general does not feel the want of such articles as he is not accustomed to use, and his labour commonly exceeds the quantity of produce his habits demand. This accumulating principle, can be noticed even among the negroes of the plantations in the West-Indies. Many of them are possessed of some hundred dollars, a few years after they come from Africa. Although European journeymen do not accumulate, from the hurry they are for marrying, yet the possessors of capital do not equally expend all their revenue, and by means of these the capital of the nation must always be on the increase, except, when counteracted by some great cause. This is that wish of bettering his condition, that has been ascribed to man. But in reality, mankind can pretty nearly be divided into thoughtless dissipators, or equally thoughtless accumulators, according as their inclinations lead. Knowledge is the effect of capital. When in a hunting society, it was perceived, that

some animals were of such tame nature, as might be kept near the habitations of its members, for use in time of scarcity, those animals, or that capital, produced that knowledge. Again, after having been in possession of a certain increased capital of that kind, either by natural multiplication, or by the chase, they become settled to a spot for a longer time, and had a chance of observing the growth of nutritious vegetables from the seed, and of taking advantage of this discovery. This advance towards agriculture could never have been made without a stock of food from tame flocks or the well furnished forest or lake. If from this period we proceed on to the highest state of culture, we will always perceive this alternate ascent of capital and knowledge. According to these principles, in those countries not covered with woods, and abounding with horned cattle, sheep, or horses, man must have made comparatively rapid progress, and from them in all probability, proceeded civilization. Whereas, where the country was covered with forests, and nothing in them but animals of a wild nature, his improvement must be very slow. We believe experience warrants this supposition. When society increases in capital, the demand for the product of agriculture, and arts, augments in the same proportion, and likewise competition. Persons of ingenuity improve the ordinary methods of working; others must adopt these improvents, or else they will not sell their effects, or get less for them. With the increase of riches, more refined arts, such as music, poetry, painting, statuary, philosophy, &c. come likewise in demand. Men of talents, and able to afford themselves a good education, will dedicate themselves to these pursuits. Printing will be discovered when the subservient arts be in a suitable state; it has been known in China time out of mind. All those who can afford it, will purchase the products of literature, if not out of taste from ostentation, and to avoid the stigma of barbarity. The circulation of books and newspapers, will stimulate the curiosity and guide the taste of those persons who are capable of mental improvement. Even poetry itself comes to reward its popular votaries with something more than bare fame, by the sale of their works, without depending on the caprices of the great, that give themselves out for the protectors of learning. Every body affects to profess tenets received among those considered as enlightened; and by the means of these, the opinions of the people at large mend gradually, in a traditional manner, and upon trust. This proneness of mankind to be led in their opinions, is a wise and benevolent dispensation of Providence; for if the caprice of independence of mind, could once become general, life would be a continued scene of controversy, wrangling and complete insanity. And so, instead of advising people to make use of their understanding, and judge for themselves, the precept ought to be; follow established doctrines, for it is a million to one, at least, that you will fall into some very great absurdity, the moment that you attempt to deviate. This, far from stopping the progress of improvement, brought on by the melioration of circumstances, would tend to free its path from the obstacles with which vanity lumbers it. Nor ought there to be any fear that men, that have made, or fancy they have made, any

discovery, will keep it from the world by any consideration of the kind. When capital remains stationary, the improvement of society becomes so likewise, as has been the case in China and in India. Nay, even a society that has reached a high degree of improvement, will decay in knowledge as its capital diminishes. The demand for the refined arts decreases, as also that for ordinary industry ; and so dexterity must be by degrees neglected, and at last forgotten. Men of genius have no opportunity of cultivating their talents, and if they did, themselves and works would pass unnoticed. This has been the case with Egypt, and with all those countries that once were flourishing. No regulations of government can stop this decay of culture, without correcting those evils which occasion the decay of capital : Nor bring on an enlightened state of the nation, but by means of establishing that order of things, that are the most fit for augmenting the capital. Adam Smith, says, that no government ever took any suitable steps towards this end. On the contrary, that the errors of their regulating systems, have been corrected by the principle of accumulation.

Capital increases either by natural accumulation, or by a flux of it from other countries, by means of conquest or by commerce. Capital, like any other merchandize, will go where it can obtain better profits.—(See Adam Smith.) Capital has likewise its positive, and preventive checks. The preventive are, sterility of the country, scarcity of territory, and that men will not work, even if able, further than necessity will push them. Capital will increase wants, so that at the same time that what characterizes a civilized from a savage society, is capital ; a proportionate increase of wants distinguishes too the former from the latter. These wants are first introduced by the desire of distinction of the rich, and followed by the rest, as far as practicable, out of emulation. In a country where some would be very rich, and the generality very poor, this emulation cannot take place ; and the lower classes will satisfy themselves with the bare necessities, rather than work more than this requires, even if by so doing they could obtain some of the conveniences ; for, as we have said before, men do not feel the want of those things, to which they have not been accustomed, and what forms the principle of accumulation is too that of inercy. But where there is a gradation, every class emulates the one above it ; and this is a continual spur, to wants, expences and industry. The despotism of a government, where a man may be deprived of his riches, by an order, or in the name of the tyrant, will put a stop to the wish of acquiring them, and will prevent the employment of those already got for fear of a discovery. Mistaken regulations and encouragements will divert capital from those channels, where it would flow to the greatest advantage. All those laws and customs that discourage foreigners in carrying or sending their capital into a country, tend to diminish the capital of that nation. When a person takes a capital into a country, and there augments it, he creates necessities and industry to that amount ; even if he afterwards takes it away, its place will be filled from the richer nations with more or less promptitude, and certainty, as liberality and security

may be established, in the country where it is to go. It may here be urged, that by this rule government influences the condition of the people ; but we must observe, as we will see in the sequel, that in those circumstances the despot is tyrannical, because the people is miserable, and the people is not miserable because the despot is tyrannical. Take off the despot and an universal depredation will take place, infinitely worse than the rapacity of the government. Mistaken regulations proceed from the ignorance of the nation, and an enlightened sovereign could not do them away without displeasing his subjects. The positive checks are war, that destroys capital in two modes ; by the expense it causes, and by the destruction and plunder taken when an enemy enters the country. Luxury and ostentation, both of the government and individuals are positive checks. The only advantage to be derived from the quantity of food, raiment and lodging, that is employed in the formation of an elegant equipage, is the encouragement of some of the arts. But if that capital has been invested in the improvement of a ground, or something similar, it would have been reproduced with profit. Commerce with poor nations, is another check of this class. This commerce must be carried on with capital of the richer people. Let us take a view of the connection between England and Portugal. England sends first the manufactures, that are necessary to purchase wine, furnishes the ships that are to transport them : Has in Portugal factors, who advance funds to farmers. In short, English capital goes there in every shape, in search of a better market. Much of it remains for ever, either on account of bankruptcies, or because many of the owners settle in that country entirely. But although the greatest part should return with profit, yet the increase of demand for capital proportioned to the increase of trade, keeps in that line a portion of which England is always deprived. To make this point more clear, we will suppose a gentleman in London who has an estate in Russia, that yields a great profit, but should be continually making such additions and improvements, as not only to absorb the whole revenue, but great sums besides. Can it be said that whilst he carries on this system, he is adding to the riches of England ? Colonies are of the same nature as commerce with the poorer nations, with the addition, that as the mother country can in them monopolize the trade more completely, profits are larger, and their tendency to impoverish her is still greater. It was extensive colonization that retarded the progress of Spain and Portugal. Their colonies were established at a period, when the capital of those nations could not be very great ; as it is proved by the great difficulties Columbus had, in obtaining his paltry equipment, even from a queen of Castile, sanguine in the undertaking. An expedition, that now, the wives of some tradesmen, could fit out from their pin money. These nations, whatever might be their comparative condition with others, were like the rest of Europe, just emerging from barbarity. (See Capmany's critical notes.) The establishment of an empire, in such distant regions, and the carrying on of its commerce, drew from the mother country, the capital that ought to have fostered its prosperity. The rage of embarking in colonial undertakings must have been very

great ; for soon after the discovery of America, there was a great number of towns of some importance, composed of white inhabitants, whose demands and trade increased daily. Every thing must have been done with the capital of Europe. We are no longer in a state of believing the accounts of powerful empires, prodigious quantities of gold, and other wonders of the kind, left us by the conquerors, or discoverers of those countries, with a view of exciting our admiration towards their persons, or achievements, which certainly were very great, if we only consider their magnitude; their novelty, the obstacles of nature, and the ignorance of the extent of the perils, that were to be encountered. All this would appear to much greater advantage in its natural garb, than disgraced with the monstrous atrocities that must have been committed, if those fables had had any reality. No more credit ought to be given to the exaggerated accounts of Bartolome de las Casas. Cuba, where he says so many Indians have been murdered, as would not be supported in that Island, by the highest state of cultivation, is yet covered with impassable forests, of such a nature, on account of the quality of the timber, as required thousands of years to be formed. All those countries were subdued by private adventurers, without wealth or credit before their achievements. The most insignificant of the African states, could not be subverted by such feeble means. Montezuma himself was but a naked savage, and not a vestige of his power or cities was discernible, immediately after the conquest of his dominions, by the Spaniards ; when the remains of an anterior people, of which no account could be gathered in his time, are still visible in many parts of that country, particularly a whole and considerable city called Palenque, near the Laguna de terminos, in the province of Yucatan. The history of the conquest of Mexico, by Solis, the most esteemed of those narrations, ought to be considered as by far the best epic poem in existence, the Iliad itself not excepted. The events are interesting, and poetically probable. The characters plausible, and the style noble and easy. That a fiction of that kind should so long pass for a true history, is not to be wondered at, if we consider, that the learned are yet looking out for the seat of Troy, and for the palaces of Priam : Although it is evident from Homer's discriptions, that the kings that besieged that famous city, were only herdsmen, not more than tolerably at their ease, and not over polite. Whatever might be the state of Spain, in the reign of Charles the Vth. certain it is, that at the beginning of the reign of Philip the Vth. she only contained six millions of inhabitants, (as it is asserted by the most creditable writers) and those very poor.— There was not a man among the natives, of scientific or literary note, not a proficient surgeon, not one capable of directing a road, or a canal. Charles the IIId. had to take all such person from France. From that period the population has increased to eleven millions ; knowledge of every description, and every thing else, has progressed in a much greater proportion. The only satisfactory cause we can find for such melioration, is that other nations of Europe, having grown richer than Spain, their capital went there in search of greater profit, and by the means of this the draining

to the colonies was counteracted. The same is the principal source of the improvement of Russia. If Peter the Great had never existed, things, in all probability, would have gone on pretty much the same as they have. Hume says, "That the depression of the lords, and rise of the commons in England, after the statutes of alienation, and the increase of trade, and industry, are more easily accounted for by general principles, than the depression of the Spanish, and rise of the French monarchies, after the death of Charles the Vth. Had Henry the IVth, Cardinal Richelieu, and Louis the XIVth. been Spaniards, and Philip the II. III. and IVth. and Charles II. been Frenchmen, the history of these nations would have been reversed." If Mr. Hume said, had the French discovered and colonized America, instead of the Spaniards, that the history of these nations would have been reversed, the matter would have come nearer the fact, and be as easily accounted for by general principles, as the depression of the lords, and the rise of the commons in England, that is, by the increase of industrious capital in England, and by the decrease of it in Spain, at least in a comparative ratio, with France. If other nations did not feel the effect of colonization so perceptibly as Spain and Portugal, it was that they did not undertake it in so extensive a manner, or that they were already in a state of bearing better such drainings, when they adopted that system. Another positive check to capital, is the mortality of persons of all ages, before they have replaced by their labour, that part they have consumed to the period of their death. How much by this check capital must be affected, may be noticed in the checks to population above enumerated. The last check to capital, is the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence. The profit of stock and the wages of labour in every department, is regulated as has been established by Mr. Ricardo, by that of agriculture. When a nation manufactures her own commodities, it is evident that the profit of this branch of industry cannot be greater nor inferior, all things considered, than that of agriculture for capital passing from one to the other, will soon put them on a level. The same is the case if she exports commodities to a great profit. The inferior lands will not then be cultivated. The demand for the produce of the earth, will raise its price at home, as also, where it is purchased. Another reason why agriculture must regulate the price of labour and profit of stock, is that by far the greatest expenditure of a nation is in food, as it is the most necessary to man. The greatest part of the price, even of the superfluities, is the food employed in their production, and so a much larger capital must be employed at home or abroad, in raising this article than any other. The produce of labour in agriculture is too less liable of being increased by ingenuity. A piece of land in the highest improvement, will not yield double, than when only tolerably cultivated. The labouring individuals of a rich nation, excel those of a poor one in their dress and furniture, rather than in their food. It is agriculture too that keeps manufacturing capital from sinking to the lowest rate of profit; suppose that England had no lands to cultivate, her population could only be what the demand for her manufactures would require, and the increasing

surplus of capital would have to go to other countries, or else the profits would become the lowest possible, and the capital perish at last: for the owners would have to live on the principal, having no profits. When a nation comes to that state of population and capital, that her most inferior lands are brought under cultivation, all her other branches of industry are equally carried to all demand.— Labour is little productive. The profit of stock and wages very low, rent very high, and the ostentation of the land holder very great. In these circumstances, if an extensive new branch of industry is not discovered, the tendency of the population to increase, will press so hard against the demand of labour, that those that have nothing but their industry cannot live. All the small capitals are eaten up, and only the great ones can be preserved. By this process, the very inferior lands cease to be cultivated, and labour is again productive; but as the fare of the labourer has been reduced to the meanest possible, and as the demand for labour does not increase as fast as population, interest of stock and rent of land is high, and the generality of the people miserable. This has probably been the course of China. But, if besides this by the increase of industry in other nations, a people in this state has been deprived of a great part of her foreign trade, capital will perish faster than in the anterior case, and the condition of the people become more retrograde. This seems to have been the process of the different states of India. By this we perceive, that the exportation or destruction of capital, is highly beneficial to a nation after she comes to a certain degree of improvement. In this point of view, the national debt of England has not been so detrimental to her, as some have imagined. That capital, it is true, might have gone to other countries, and there create demand for her industry; but if it had remained at home, it would have accelerated that dismal period when a nation becomes retrograde. The misfortune of England is not her debt, it is that she has too much capital, and too much population respecting her territory. If the interest of the debt did not act as check on her capital, the evil would be still greater, for the profit of stock would be smaller, and the population greater, and of course the recompence of labour more reduced. When the population of a nation is too great for her capital, which more or less is the condition of every country. If there is an ample territory, the people are in a progressive state, as soon as they cease to be savage. But if capital does not flow there from other countries, this progress will be very slow until the gradual introduction of some degree of general luxury. For luxury, although a check to capital, is still a greater one on population, and so capital increases faster than before, respecting population. Besides, that the poorer a nation is, the greater are those other checks to capital that proceed from tyranny and ignorance. But when the population is too large for the territory, which cannot be the case without the nation having had a very large capital, then she will retrograde till she comes to a certain point, where she will remain stationary. That is, if the face of nature itself does not deteriorate a thing not improbable. Certainly the pyramids of Egypt, and those cities whose ruins are to be found in the deserts of Africa, were never built in such looking places as they now stand in.

Now we will examine the effect of the state of capital on governments. But before we proceed, we must take into consideration the difference between a country with a large capital, and one with large capitalists. England has more great capitalists than the United States, but this last, if we value what is possessed or managed by every individual there, has more capital respecting the population. We must likewise make a difference between riches and capital. Riches are large portions of capital possessed by a single individual. Of course a country with large capitals can make a greater display of riches, than one with greater capitalists more divided. There may be a carriage and an elegant house in a town, where there is an inhabitant worth £100,000, and this cannot take place where there is two thousand worth £2000 each. Government will likewise have greater facility in raising any sum, either in taxes or by loans from opulent men, than from a greater number of people possessing the same property among them. A single individual worth £10,000, can better spare £1000, than one hundred persons possessed of £100 each. The one infringes only on his ostentation for this purpose, the others on their conveniences or necessaries. The capital of England is also crowded together in a smaller compass, and so the country is more improved. That of the United States spread over a very large surface. As capital is more productive in the United States, for only lands of the first quality are there cultivated—it goes from England to the United States.

In a savage state, that is, when society is entirely destitute of capital of any importance, men are pretty equal. The only difference is that of natural advantages, and these will never enable any one to command any portion of subsistence, that others will not be able to get almost as well. Thus no one will depend or be master of another. Their chiefs can only be their leaders in war, or their orators in council. But when some of the society acquire flocks, many will be willing to relinquish the fatigues and uncertainty of the chase, and be the dependants of those, that have subsistence to dispose of. At last the richest of these herdsmen become characters of importance. Their weaker neighbours must adhere to some of them for protection. Here we have the patriarchal, or pastoral governments, as described in sacred and profane history, and as they are to be seen among the Arabs and Tartars. As yet there is no written laws. Every chief decides in all cases, according to his judgment. We may now perceive the commencement of slavery. The lord of the flock will soon make a very little difference between the servant born under his power, and the bullock reared in his flock. When the number of his dependants was small, so that he saw them every day eat and live with them, the condition of a servant was more like that of a free dependant, than of a slave. But as soon as the number augmented, so that their relative distance increased much, and captives over whom the conqueror imagined himself with absolute dominion, were introduced, slavery took its wonted appearance. When a herdsman became very powerful, and his flocks too numerous for continual changing of residence, necessity indicated agriculture. He parcelled out lands to his dependants, and ruled over them in the same manner as before. This appears to have been the

state of Greece as described in the Iliad, which was probably as it was in the time of Homer. Ulysses was king of Ithaca. His dominions were a property small enough for a private gentleman, particularly if we consider the state of cultivation they must have been in. It seems that Greece was made up of this sort of kings, their families, and slaves. Nor was the state of Europe very different from this, some centuries ago. The continual broils of these gentlemen, must have produced many confederacies among them. The war of Troy was occasioned by the elopement of a lady. The House of Priam, was of sufficient power to call forth all Greece to arms against it. And although most, if not all, of what is related of that famous siege, is certainly fabulous, yet similar transactions must be common in that state of society. These frequent confederacies brought the necessity of a head to command them in war, levy the necessary contributions, and adopt such general regulations as their mutual defence required. The most powerful of these federated kings, or barons, would become their chief. A place of meeting would be appointed, where the general interest would be discussed; which must naturally be the residence of their chief. And now we already have something similar to what passed in the allodial and feudal systems. The necessity of defence and custom, kept these barons together, as a nation, but the spirit of division and jealousy, so natural to man, often produced broils among themselves, and insubordination to their chief, whom we will now call king. In the strife between the king for power, and the barons for independence, the formation of towns, as Dr. Smith ably points out, was what turned the balance in favour of the king. Some spot must be fixed to carry on the commerce or exchange, that was then practised. Taverns of some sort must soon be established to afford necessaries to dealers, then stores, then different sorts of tradesmen. When these places were sufficiently populous, the king would court their adherence by the offer of franchises, and lend them his force to shake off the galling yoke of the lords. The facility with which they could form into a militia, and fortify themselves, the increase of their property, more rapid than in the country, made them powerful allies of the crown, whose favour it was their interest to court, as much as that of the crown to receive their aid. The towns now too send deputies to the assembly.—From this time the importance of the barons decays every day.—The crown takes from them their power of legislation over their vassals, and invests it in that assembly, that before was only intended to regulate measures of mutual defence. Now not only the general assembly makes the laws, but the judges are appointed by the crown. After this the barons themselves are gradually stripped of their personal privileges, and reduced to the level of ordinary subjects. Retaining almost no advantage over them, but what flowed from their wealth. Thus the independence of the people, originated in the broils between the king and his barons, (See Robertson's Charles V.) and gained ground with royal prerogative. But now the king, master of the whole force of the country, becomes absolute alike over all. The barons too join him against the people; because feeling themselves impotent to revive their

ancient pretensions to power, are afraid of being assimilated to what they call the mob. Although the commoners may be too rich to be slaves, they are not sufficiently so to be rulers. The barons have been dispossessed of their great prerogatives, but retain yet a great proportion of the wealth of the nation; therefore have many adherents among the commonalty, to whom they may be of service, by leases of land, employment in their household, or interest at court. But noblemen by their habits, and rivalship of ostentation with each other, tend to be losing in point of property, whilst the commoners by their industry, gain daily on that ground. As noblemen grow comparatively poor, adherents pass from one class to another. A number of tolerable rich farmers, manufacturers, and merchants, will balance the influence of any nobleman, with regard to the number of people they can employ. Tolerably rich are mentioned, because opulence is the only efficient nobility. As these different classes prevail by their property, the notions and prejudices of each body, will direct the measures of government. When the opulent have the direction, measures will be such as will tend to secure distinction for themselves and families, (here is the origin of titles, entailments &c.) and to the military glory and splendour of the nation; for every one of them will expect to have a very conspicuous share in those things. Where commoners have the upper hand, measures will be intended for the promotion of the franchises of the people, and the encouragement of trade and industry. And although their resolutions by embarrassing the natural course of things, will for the most part be of a tendency to produce the contrary effect, yet the principle of accumulation will counteract their blunders. This is the most natural, although not the necessary process of a people. Conquests and colonies will make considerable alterations, by introducing or extracting capital. Likewise, when the king became absolute by the rival power of nobles and commoners, he may dissolve or cease to call the national assembly. But this causes no substantial difference. If the assembly is continued, it will only be a passive tool to the views of the crown, until property turns the balance in favor of the nobles, or the commoners, government becomes popular or aristocratical. If the assembly has been dissolved, as the nation grows rich and advanced, transactions are more complicated—the old system every day is more embarrassing—a new order of things is absolutely necessary—a council of some sort is formed—and the government, as when the assembly remained, becomes aristocratical, or popular, as the state of property will direct. Many nations have not passed through the pastoral state, but turned agriculturalists, from hunters or fishers. In that case as men get settled to a spot, they become objects of prey to their neighbours, in equal circumstances. They have a stock of provisions—themselves may be useful slaves: and so their chief will seize upon greater power, and at last be their master. For there is no alternative between serving abroad, or obeying at home. In this inclination of mankind to brutal force, and to kidnap and waylay each other, the origin duelling may be traced. When barbarians had overcome something of their grossest ferocity, they began to prefer the additional risk of an open

attack, to the continual anxiety and apprehension from the plots of others, and so they agreed to give each other notice, when they intended hostility. Such is our proneness to follow custom, for the want of a better guide, that because our ancestors considered it cowardice, not to do themselves justice with their swords, when there was no other method of obtaining it, nor no other rule of right established but personal force; we must appeal to private battles, although now perfectly out of all sense, and in entire contradiction with the state of society. Those countries where duelling has not been practised, passed at once, by colonies, or commerce, from that condition for which it was too soon, to that for which it was too late. And the only method to put a stop to it now, would be the complete and unavoidable ruin of all parties concerned, so as to shelter in a creditable manner, the natural love of life, against the assaults of vanity. Or perhaps some degrading or ridiculing punishments would answer better, such as flogging in a public place, or putting in the pillory, with a barber's basin on the head, as Cervantes represents Don Quixotte. But if there is a law difficult to pass, and still more difficult to execute it is this: For what legislator, or officer of government, can be willing to occasion the least suspicion of his cowardice? We are all extremely ingenuous at hiding our faults.

From the anterior facts, the following principles must be drawn: That the nature and laws of every country must be the effect of the condition of the people. The condition of the people is caused by the quantity of lands and capital, respecting the population and facility of providing for the natural growth of population. When the capital of a nation is small, there cannot be a great number of capitalists, for if many respecting the population have capital, even if moderate, that of the nation cannot be small. Again, the capital of a nation cannot be great when there is only few capitalists, let these be ever so opulent. It follows of course that a large national capital must be in many hands, a small one in few. A very rich person does not feel the stimulus of want to industry and is inclined to ease and ostentation. Land is the most desirable source of revenue for such an individual; as it is of no use without capital to cultivate it. He that has a small piece of land and no capital will sell it; and so where the capital is small, the lands too will accumulate in few hands by feudalism or purchase. As the capital of a nation grows large, respecting the population, and until foreign trade, or manufactures be established to a considerable extent. The gradual accumulation of riches will be inverted in lands as almost the only method of securing a revenue. In a nation with an extensive foreign commerce and manufactures, only opulent persons think of having landed estates—the rest either farm tracts of land, or employ their capital in undertakings from which they expect greater profits, the laws will follow this direction given by capital, where the lands are in few hands either by want of capital or by the purchases of the opulent, the possessors will try to keep their estates entire, for the lustre of their families by entailments as far their urgencies will allow. When the lands have been divided, as no brilliancy can reflect to families by such

small possessions; and as the owners have no credit to pass laws, the lands remain free for alienation. A nation becomes mercantile and manufacturing, when by the extent of her capital, and of course of her population, she has to cultivate worse lands than her neighbours. Now from the want of capacity in the mass of men their spirit of disagreement and distrust, their wish of preference, their dependence on the dispensators of subsistence, proceeding from the too ample stock of labourers, the owners of capital and of land will always govern, and this too according to their views, that is their interest; and so when there is no capital, a nation must be in the hunting state, and individuals in savage independence.

When the capital of a nation is so small that it does not afford the means of maintaining an army, the country will be governed by petty tyrants independent of each other, who, as they are the owners of the persons of their subjects, will be so too of their lands

Where capital is small, yet sufficient to maintain an army, a monarchy will be established either by conquest or by the aid of towns, or of some of the barons disaffected from the rest, and it will be a despotic one, that is where the army is essential to the existence of government; and where there is no written laws, but officers of government decide in all cases, according to custom, or their notion of things. If from this state capital diminishes, so as not to afford the maintenance of an army, the monarchy will dissolve into petty feudalities. If it increases, business becoming more complicated, written laws will be necessary, and the government will grow into an aristocracy, if property has augmented by conquest, or incline to popularity, if by industry.

Where there is a considerable capital, but the greatest part in the hands of a few, and some in the hands of many, government will be aristocratical. There cannot be much capital, where the commoners are entirely destitute; for there will be no industry.—Aristocracy approaches the condition of a commoner, to that of a slave, more than even despotism.

We must make a difference between feudalism and aristocracy. In feudalism, each baron governs a separate district with independent authority. In aristocracy the whole country is governed by the opulent collectively.

When capital is considerable, and pretty equally divided between the opulent and the commoners, the government will be an absolute an hereditary monarchy, and the monarch will have infinitely more power, than with despotism; for he may command at least one half of the force of the nation, against the other half, with the advantage of unanimity and order, against disagreement and confusion. Whereas, when he is despotic, he has to be continually submitting to the frantic caprices of the lawless rabble, that in those circumstances form the army. In an absolute monarchy, the army is not essential to the existence of the government. It is kept for foreign war, and to quell partial disorders. It is distributed at different points in small parties. If there is no political division in the nation, a combination of the chiefs against their sovereign is scarcely practicable, on account of their mutual jealousies, and the

want of provision to maintain their forces together for any time, so as to overcome the resistance that may be found in the other orders of the people. In short, each and all the members of the army, depend on the sovereign, instead of the sovereign depending on them. But in a despotic government the sovereign depends on them, and more particularly on his life guard. His deposition and beheading, is such a common occurrence, that the chiefs of that guard, come to be looked upon, as the real heads of the state, and the other branches of the army will follow them, with more or less obedience as circumstances may stand. The throne can only be elective in feudalism, in pure democracy, a pure aristocracy, or in despotism. As soon as the monarch has the whole, or a considerable part of the power, he naturally secures the succession in his family, which circumstance, fortunately, is the most suited to the interest of the nation, as it avoids the disorders of election.

Where the capital is large, and the greatest part in the hands of the commoners, the government will tend to popularity, whilst there be an easy discharge to increasing population; but as soon as this is wanted, if by having no foreign trade or other events, the lands and capital come to be so divided, that there is few opulent men; the government must be an absolute monarchy, for the councils having no clear interest of their own to follow, will enter the fields of speculation, and of course of vision. Their constituents not being bound to them by dependence for subsistence, will not sustain their authority. Distress will introduce trouble, anarchy and despotism; but whilst the power be in the hands of the monarch, there will be as much practical liberty as needed, for the nation is not in circumstances suitable to a barbarous tyranny. For the same reasons, the monarch, provided that he does not call on the wits of his subjects, is sure on his throne, until the too great excess of population over the means of subsistence again bring on barbarity. By this means we see that the too great subdivision of land, where it is not very abundant, is equally inimical to the liberty and to the happiness of the people, by breaking subordination, and by encouraging population. The labourer fares better in a nation not over burthened with people and with a large capital than a small proprietor in an over peopled country. The number of common labourers is also greater in the latter than in the former. He that has a small piece of land and a cabbin, cannot resist the temptation to marry, lowers his fare, and brings up a family in rags. Mr. Malthus has already treated this subject completely. We are afraid that in France, lands are too subdivided both for the present order of her government, and for the future prosperity of her people.

A country tends to aristocracy, despotism or feudalism when its capital decays, or when all its branches of industry are brought to such a degree of fullness that population presses hard against the means of subsistence, or when it grows rich by conquest. Not much equality can take place in the division of the spoils of the vanquished. Likewise fine climates have a tendency to servility; as the wants are there few, men find less difficulty in early marriages, and in rearing their offspring, and the country is more

overstocked with inhabitants, than in the severer climates. Where better houses, more clothes, and fire-wood are necessary, appetite is keener, vegetation not so abundant, people must abstain more from marriage, or else want will soon correct their error. Many wretches too, perish, that in the milder regions would protract their misery, and contribute that of others. The extreme difference in the condition of the casts in India, proceed from this entirely. The higher orders are in the absolute possession of all the wealth and industry of the nation. It is as natural in a father to teach his trade to his children, when he knows he cannot have any other method of getting their livelihood, as it is to leave them his property at his death. Besides, luxury, pride, and other circumstances in a great measure stop births in the higher classes; and likewise it is probable, that there, like in Europe, the surplus of population of those classes discharges itself by degrees in the lower ones, whilst the fine climate and sobriety of India, multiply the miserable paria, so much beyond what he is wanted, that he is valued less than the most contemptible beast. Any body has a right to kill, or treat him at pleasure. His very sight stains the *purity* of the other casts. Let benevolent philosophers, recollect, now, that accounts of any thing like benevolence, or generosity, in a community, always turn out to be either the sketches of fancy entirely, or else transient, very circumscribed, and largely exaggerated instances: whilst every description of brutality, even if by its magnitude looks like the portrait of a disordered imagination, finds reality in life among very polished nations, and in those too, whose civilization loses itself in the obscurity of time. In the power of population over subsistence, we may find too, the cause of polygamy. Where men are of so little value, that by their comparative boldness and strength are so much more fit to produce food, women must of course be slaves, and their masters will take as many, as will suit their convenience, or caprice. A harem in the east, is one of the customary manners of ostentation, the same as a large retinue of livery negroes in the West-Indies.

By the foregoing observations, we perceive, that under any names for the institutions of government, there may be as much freedom or slavery, as under any other, if by freedom we understand independence. We conceive, that an obscure individual, with some property, is really more free in Algiers, than a servant in the United States. Any attempts to bring on, or keep a state of society, that does not suit the situation of property, are perfectly useless on account of the character of mankind, and of their mutual dependence for subsistence. It may well be said, *that every country enjoys all the practical liberty, of which it is capable, in its condition; and that no country can be kept long from the liberty, that in its circumstances it can enjoy.* No improvement in a government can come but from itself. The moment that the power of the existing authorities are weakened by sudden regulations, the country must fall into anarchy, if that is not counteracted by some great cause. And this even, if all parties are agreed as to the ends of the reforms, and if the private views of individuals do not come into action. Things utterly impossible. But if they were

possible, there would be so much disagreement as to the means, so much vision brought forward, that nothing could come to any substance. Of this we have had the clearest proof in France.—The French enjoyed before the revolution, all or nearly all the practical liberty that their condition would allow. The only grievance of any consequence they could complain of, was the unequal distribution of the public burthens. The bastiles, letters decachees, &c. were nothing but the decayed remains of a salutary despotism in the hands of the crown, against turbulent noblemen. No sovereign was ever more ready to give up any part of his authority. Some of the nobles and clergy were equally well disposed; and the king and the commoners were strong enough to have awed, without a struggle, the refractory into any compliance. An assembly is called to level the burthens, and to give forms to the substances that existed already, and the nation falls in the most dreadful confusion. The temporary melioration which we perceive in that kingdom, proceeded by chance from a cause of which the revolutionary legislators and reformers had no conception, that is, the war that threw the capital of foreign trade, into the improvement of the interior of the country. The deficit in the finances was too inconsiderable for a country of the resources of France, to be the cause of the revolution. And of much less power could have been the idle speculations of the philosophers. The same revolution took place in England without such deficit, and the dreams of equality have heated the brains of visionaries, and are the favorite topic of the populace at all times in all countries. The real cause was in both countries, that the executive lost its authority. In England the monarch tried an out-stretch of royal prerogative, that the state of property did not warrant without going far enough in the means. Such things are not to be done by halves. In France the king called on an assembly not in use, to make those reforms he ought to have made himself. If a monarch does not force against the state of property, and if he does not call on his subjects for reforms, he has no need of fearing rebellions in a tolerable civilized country. For the stupidity and spirit of jealousy and division, which is the nature of man, will enable him to go much further in the momentary exercise of power, than what the state of property will warrant. Nothing but a very perceptible and urgent common interest can keep men together for a length of time, sufficient to effect any thing of importance. For the same reason, when a country has once fallen into anarchy, it cannot recover its natural position, that is, that order of things suitable to its state of capital, by any other means but despotism. Perhaps no wiser act of government ever took place in Europe, than the decree of Ferdinand the VIIth. of Spain, dissolving the Cortes, and placing every thing on the same footing as it was before his departure. Which act has the more merit, when we consider the many plausible decrees that the Cortes had passed. If the United States did not fall into anarchy at their separation from Great Britain, it was owing to the smallness of their towns, where almost all the inhabitants had to work for their daily bread—and the great distance between these towns. There were no wealthy men to put

things in motion, nor people in desperate circumstances to riot.— The population of the country, although thin, was sufficiently near, not to allow the towns to dictate to them entirely. This is what even now keeps that government from dissolution. The rupture had its origin in the jealousy, between Englishmen of one side of the water, and those of the other side. Reason, the most efficient to produce a separation, whenever the Americans should think themselves strong enough to begin the fray. This is the cause of that surprising unanimity that pervaded the whole country from north to south, when there was so little motive to complain of the oppression of the mother country. This circumstance put in motion those persons who were fond of distinction. The provinces continued governing themselves the same as before. They formed a congress for the purpose of providing the means of defence. The difficulty of subjugating a territory so very extensive, and the blunders, that it was natural enough the British should commit, gave of course success to their American colonies. To principles of the same sort we may ascribe the late successful struggle of the Spaniards against the French. The natural enmity between man and man, animated the Spaniards against the French, and when insulted in a glaring manner, so as to rouse the indignation of the whole people at once, a fray took place. There is always in that country a sufficient portion of the population disposed to an adventurous life, owing to that as the capital of the nation is small, it cannot give a sure and liberally paid employment to all its members, from this source numberless guerrillas sprung up. The blunders of the French, the English aid, and the events of Russia, brought things to an issue, that certainly cannot be ascribed to the wisdom of a government whose authority scarcely extended further than the walls of Cadiz. The French army kept away anarchy.

In the hunting state, man is savage in morality.

In a state of slavery, he is barbarous.

Under despotism, he is rude.

Under aristocracy, he is profligate without limits. The great vie each with the other in their excesses, which become commendable, for as man in general has no judgement to discriminate between right and wrong, virtue and vice, he establishes his opinions by what is practiced by the greatest part of those he reputes in respectable circumstances. The small are proud to imitate the vices of their masters, and besides have many of their own.

In absolute monarchy, profligacy has some discountenance from those that cannot indulge in it, but live decently by good behaviour.

In popular governments, as few can indulge in vice, compared to those that, by industry and care, may have the conveniences of life, the people in general declaim against excesses, to console themselves for not being able to practise them, become puritanical, and cant virtue. But what they gain in regularity of conduct, they lose in loyalty to each other. As few are sufficiently rich to be above anxiety, and all can by care and diligence, enjoy some convenience, they are close and overreaching in their dealings; they

will take every advantage that the risk of a glaring loss of reputation will allow, and so are notably selfish in the disposal of their means, and services. Although by the competition of capital among them the wish of gain, and their incapacity of discrimination, they will sell on credit with facility, and not be very particular to whom they trust.

We will divide want into poverty, or the scanty fare of the labourer, and misery, or the want of a living of any kind.

In the hunting state, poverty is very great, so as to be misery.—A savage is more liable to entire want, than any person in a civilized society.

In a state of slavery, poverty is greater, and misery not so great, as in any state of civilization. The master will employ, sell, or kill all his slaves. Proofs of this last, are the gladiator shows, and the slaughter of servants at funerals in practice among some nations.

Under despotism, poverty is not so great, but misery greater than in the anterior states, for population increases faster, than what is wanted.

Under aristocracy, poverty and misery will be greater than in any order of civilized society, for the commoner has the disadvantages of the slave, without his advantages.

Under monarchy, poverty is much smaller, than under any of the anterior governments, but misery is greater than where the people is in slavery.

In popular governments, there ought to be much less poverty and misery, than under any of the other states of society: but if it is a largely manufacturing country, misery may sometimes be greater, than any where else as the wife and children can earn something, and so births exceed demand. Also the alternatives of trade, throw for a while many people out of occupation, and the temptation to vice there is in manufacturing places, will increase that calamity.

Manners, under a despotic government, are rude and crafty, and the way of living, coarse and not neat, for the want of riches.

Under aristocracy, the great are arrogant, the small servile. The manner of living ostentatious on the one hand, and mean on the other. There will be a ridiculous mixture of grandeur and shabbiness.

Under absolute monarchy, manners are refined, there is an affectation of elevated sentiment, for the great endeavor to distinguish themselves from the common people, who try to imitate them.—There is more convenience, and less ostentation in the way of living, than in aristocracy. The capital is greater, and more divided among all classes.

In popular governments, manners are neither rude nor refined. In the way of living there is more convenience, neatness and cleanliness, than ostentation.

In the first three stages, no other knowledge ought to be expected than that of the rude arts, necessary to their manner of living.

Under all governments, the arts and sciences, of necessity, will be cultivated, in proportion as there is capital in the hands of the commoners: and those of refinement, luxury and ostentation, as



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there may be of it in the hands of the rich, yet no art can come to any considerable perfection without considerable capital in the hands of the commoners ; if among this class there is not the means of elegant education, nothing will be obtained, besides that the execution of the superior arts depends entirely on the state of the inferior ones. A people may have a mental improvement that does not belong to the state of their capital : but this will be owing to their connection, by language or government, with a more opulent nation. This is the case with the Scotch.

A nation whose government can command the greatest wealth will too be the most warlike. Her large military establishments, old, and well supported, will have that order or discipline, by which it is very difficult for every man not to do, comparatively speaking, well his duty. And this is the only valour to be expected among men, except in some gusts of fanaticism, that neither last, nor are of any avail. The losses being repaired with promptitude she will be of course successful. Her generals will acquire renown. And writers will have an opportunity of drawing fine tableaus. A poor people, like the barbarians that overturned the Roman empire, may execute a successful excursion on a weak and tottering state, but will never be able to make an impression against a well regulated people. Much of the military glory of a nation will depend too on the state of her neighbours. Any people may always be too strong for a weaker one.

We must observe, that many variations will take place in society as these ingredients of government are mixed in different proportions : And, likewise, as capital advances, or decreases in a nation. The same capital, respecting the population, that diminishes, will have a different effect, from what it has when it increases. On the first case, from habits, the necessities of man are greater, and the people is descending, by distress, from better to worse living ; capital every day is more distant from the power of increase of population, and vice and misery will appear in every shape. There will be very considerable difference seen too, as a capital is new or old. There may be in a newly civilized country, more improvement, than in an older one ; but a mixture will be found of refinement and barbarity. Civilization has not yet pervaded every part of the system, at the same time that in an ancient nation the state of improvement, may not correspond to that of manners.

Whether society was originally formed by the love of company, or that of self-preservation, or both, the principles of its improvement are :—The principle of accumulation ;—The capacity, that man has over every other animal, to repeat the practice of more complicated routines :—The capacity of some individuals to go beyond this. The obstacles to the improvement of society, are—The want of any judgment in the great majority of the species :—The natural character of enmity between man and man :—And tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence.